



Education
Coordinating
Council

Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

February 6, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Honorable Jose Huizar, Chair
Education Coordinating Council

PROJECT 51 STATUS UPDATE

On December 9, 2008 your Board requested that the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) facilitate the implementation of Project 51 in the Acton/Agua Dulce School District as a positive tribute to the memory of Jeremiah Lasater and in support of California State's new anti-bullying law, Assembly Bill 86. The following Status Update summarizes the progress which has been made to date in creating this program.

Program Implementation Progress

- On December 11, 2008, the Acton/Agua Dulce Board of Education voted to adopt Project 51 in concept. The ECC worked with the district's Board of Education, staff and the Project 51 founder to broker an agreement on the program components and a timeline for implementation.
- A 1-800 number and website, which are available 24 hours a day/7 days a week, have been established to receive complaints of bullying occurring within the school district. The school district has agreed to investigate all reported complaints within three business days and to work in partnership with Project 51 staff to ensure that each complaint is dealt with satisfactorily.
- A comprehensive anti-bullying program handbook is currently being drafted, using best practices from existing anti-bullying programs and research. This handbook will detail the school district's program implementation plan and ways in which anti-bullying language will be incorporated into their school policies.

Each Supervisor
February 6, 2009
Page 2

- Outreach efforts to educate parents and community members about bullying and how to access Project 51's hotline and website are currently being planned. These are scheduled to begin in April 2009. The ECC is partnering with the Children's Council of Los Angeles County, the Acton Boys and Girls Club, and the school district's Parent/Teacher Association and Board of Education on how best to engage parents and the surrounding community.
- Beginning this Fall, district students and school personnel will participate in an anti-bullying education curriculum in order to help them recognize the signs of bullying and address bullying behavior.
- The school district is modifying its current peer mentoring program so that every incoming freshman will be assigned an upperclassman peer mentor who has completed the anti-bullying education curriculum and can make referrals to Project 51 when needed. This revised program will start in the Fall.

Since the creation of the hotline and website, Project 51 has received over 150 calls and 45 emails from concerned parents wanting information on how to appropriately address the bullying and harassment of their children, illustrating the tremendous need for this type of program. One call was received from an Acton/Agua Dulce high school student who was being bullied by another student. This was reported to the school district which promptly responded by holding a school conference with the identified bully and his parents. As a result, the student who called the hotline has since reported that the bullying has stopped.

Project 51 can serve as a model for other school districts interested in implementing an anti-bullying program. The ECC will be inviting the Acton/Agua Dulce School District to present this model at its school superintendents meeting being held in March 2009.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (213) 473-7014. In addition, Michelle Barritt, with the Education Coordinating Council, is available at (818) 312-1927 to respond to questions from your staff.

JH:CDM:MKB

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Raymond G. Fortner, Jr., County Counsel